

LEA Back to School Back-to-School Planning Template

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Introduction

Overview and Purpose

This document outlines the critical components needed for a school district's Back-to-School plan¹. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) will use this template to create plans **aligned to the guidance document** titled "[PreK-12 Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year](#)." *Note that this planning document is an iteration of the 2020-2021 Reopening Plan Template. This document and the guidance document should be used side-by-side.*

Please consider the critical components included in the following tables to **develop or enhance** your Back-to-School plans. Then use the planning template included below each table to capture the identified information and evidence to return to the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE).

Policies and procedures related to COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies should be submitted via **electronic survey form** to RIDE by or before **Friday, August 13, 2021** for review and feedback from the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH), as applicable. Submissions will be accepted prior to August 13 and early submission is encouraged. To preview the survey and plan your responses, please see Attachment A. The electronic survey is available here: <https://forms.office.com/g/ESjpgYmqb>.

Complete Back-to-School plans must be returned to RIDE by email to back2school@ride.ri.gov and posted publicly on LEA websites by or before **Friday, August 27, 2021**.

Outline of Back-to-School Plan Components

Back-to-School plans serve the dual purpose of helping to effectively plan for instruction and safety and of serving as a communication document to staff, students, families, and the community. *Item 4 is the information that is outlined and will be captured in this document. The other items are to provide overall structure to LEA plans.*

¹ Per Rhode Island's [State Plan for the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund](#) (ARP ESSER), the Back-to-School Plan serves as the "Safe Return to In-Person and Continuity of Services Plan" required by the U.S. Department of Education. This plan, along with a substantially approvable LEA ESSER III Funding Application, are the two required components for LEAs to receive their ESSER III allocation from RIDE.

A comprehensive Back-to-School plan should include:

1. Message from the Superintendent / LEA Leader

Superintendent's Message

2. Vision and Guiding Principles for Back-to-School Operations:

- a. A strong vision includes the following 5 components:
- i. Core values – refer to [LEAP Task Force Absolute Priorities \(p. 29\)](#)
 - ii. Hopes and aspirations for the fall
 - iii. The process of building the plan
 - iv. Reinforcing the need to be agile and flexible
 - v. A high-level timeline with major milestones, including expected communication

Vision and Guiding Principles for Re-opening

- b. LEAs should be in alignment with the priorities and recommendations put forth in the [LEAP Task Force Report](#). While the vision and guiding principles may be similar to what LEAs have in their strategic plan, they should explicitly acknowledge the unique circumstances of COVID-19 planning.

3. Strengths and Challenges from the 2020-2021 School Year

- a. All LEAs should elicit feedback from students, staff, and families on the 2020-21 School Year. Please make this a priority if you have not yet gathered this feedback.

[Summary of Reopening Survey Results](#)

4. Critical Components of the Back-to-School Plan (included in tables below)

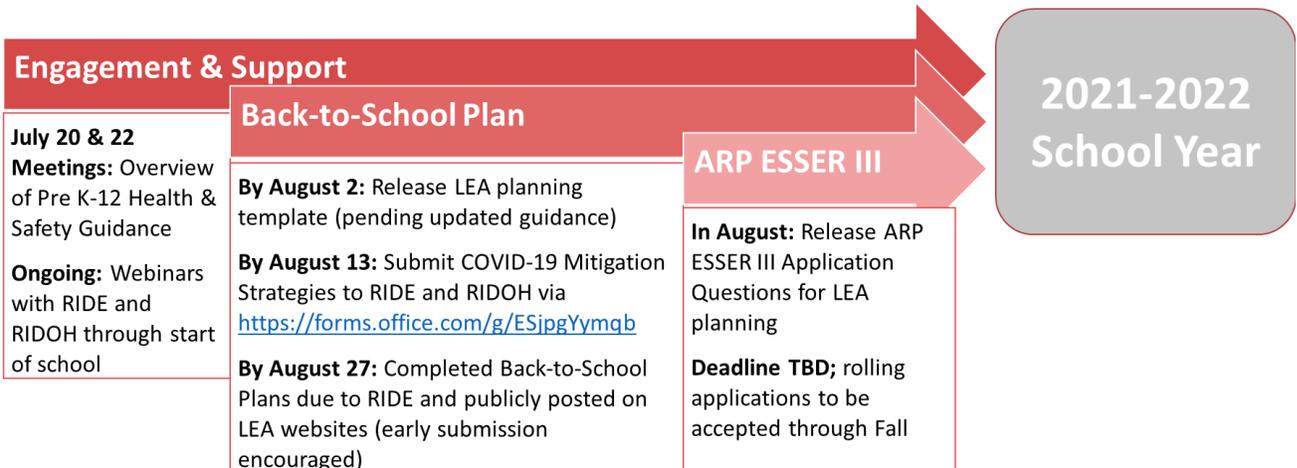
- a. This includes Health and Safety, Instruction, Social-Emotional and Mental Health Support, Reopening Operations, and Communication.
- b. Communication is embedded in each critical component table
 - i. Strong communication plans include a list of key stakeholders, a routine and timeline for ongoing communication, and high-level understanding of critical content.
 - ii. LEAs are required to review their Back-to-School Plans no less than every six months through September 30, 2024, revise as appropriate, and seek public input on any and all revisions.

Back-to-School Planning Support

RIDE's role is to ensure that all LEAs are prepared to provide students, staff, and families with a safe educational experience in the fall and to provide key resources to LEAs in support of that process. RIDE, in collaboration with RIDOH, will provide ongoing technical assistance through webinar office hours. Additionally, RIDOH will review and provide



targeted support to LEAs on Health and Safety policies and procedures, including school-based testing and the usage of face coverings.



Back-to-School Plan Submission Process

1. Using “[PreK-12 Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year](#)” each LEA completes the template with assurances and evidence, as applicable.
 - a. Policies and procedures for COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies should be submitted online at <https://forms.office.com/g/ESjpgYymqb> by **Friday, August 13, 2021**.
 - b. RIDOH will provide LEAs a copy of submitted responses, review health and safety components, and provide support to LEAs, as applicable.
2. Completed Back-to-School Plans must be submitted to back2school@ride.ri.gov and publicly posted on LEA websites by **Friday, August 27, 2021**.
3. RIDE provides confirmation of receipt of the plan and notifies the LEA if any additional information is needed.

**Note: ARP ESSER III funding uses, application questions, and application instructions will be made available to LEAs for planning purposes prior to the start of school.*

Critical Components of an LEA Back-to-School Plan

The following tables outline critical components that should be included in each LEA’s Back-to-School plan. These components are broken down into **Health and Safety (COVID-19 Control Plan), Instruction, Social-Emotional and Mental Health, and Reopening Operations**.

Within each table, there are three types of critical components -

- **Assurances** - actions and items **LEAs should incorporate** into the plan **but do not formally need to be submitted to RIDE** (though may be requested as additional

support at a later time). *In the template below, LEAs will mark "X" in a box to confirm they have this in their plan.*

- **Evidence** - actions and items **LEAs should incorporate** into plans and **need to be submitted to RIDE** through narratives or other artifacts. *In the template below, LEAs will use the blank boxes to type plans or attach/link to relevant materials.*
- **Guidance** - items that should be considered and incorporated into plans but do not need to be submitted to the state.

LEAs are required to plan for a full in-person scenario. In this document, please provide responses based on full in-person instruction.

This completed document is due to **RIDE by August 27, 2021.** *Policies and procedures for COVID-19 mitigation strategies should be submitted for feedback at <https://forms.office.com/g/ESjpgYmqb> by August 13, 2021.*



Health and Safety (COVID-19 Control Plan)		
Provide Assurance	Submit Evidence	
Promoting vaccination		
X		a. Plan and execute promotion of COVID-19 vaccination to school community, including teachers, staff, household members, and eligible students.
Physical distancing		
X		b. Develop and enforce policies on general spacing and movement to increase the occurrence of stable groups, especially in grade levels not yet eligible for vaccination. Include policies for both during the school day and before and after school programming.
X		c. Adjust policies for stable and non-stable group movement and spacing in alignment with recommendations in Health and Safety guidance.
X		d. Document where physical distancing of at least 3 feet may not be possible and outline layered mitigation measures for these circumstances.
X		e. Distribute physical distancing instructions to staff and students and post physical distancing instructions/signage for visitors.
Face coverings		
X		f. Inform students, staff, and visitors of the recommendation for mask use indoors regardless of vaccination status, and in crowded outdoor settings for individuals who are not fully vaccinated.
X		g. In the case of universal mask policies, ensure exceptions for specific categories of people as outlined in Health and Safety guidance.
X		h. Refer to CDC guidance for the use and care of masks.
Minimizing access by COVID-19-positive or symptomatic individuals		
X		i. Communicate with staff and students the need to stay home when sick, if they test positive for, have been exposed to, or have symptoms of COVID-19. Encourage monitoring for symptoms of infectious illness every day through home-based screening.
X		j. Post Symptom Signage at the entrance(s) of school and district building. Schools with more comprehensive screening methods (verbally, by app, by phone, or by another method) are not required to post screening signage.
School-based testing		
	X	k. Select, design, and resource school-based testing plans based on options outlined in Health and Safety guidance: (1) Symptomatic Testing, (2) Outbreak Testing, (3) Asymptomatic Testing. Consult RIDOH support as needed. Submit school-based testing plan at https://forms.office.com/g/ESjpgYymqb by August 14, 2021 for RIDOH review and feedback. School-based testing is opt-in only, and not required.
Cleaning, disinfection, and hand hygiene		
X		l. Utilize CDC guidance for cleaning, disinfection, and hand hygiene .



Responding to staff and students who are sick		
X		m. Schools should revise/continue to follow sick policies in alignment with The Outbreak Response Protocols: PreK-12 and communicate it to staff, students, and families.
	X	n. Assign a minimum of one representative to work with RIDOH on testing staff and students, contact tracing, case investigation, isolation and quarantine, and any other follow-up related to outbreak containment. Identify this representative to RIDE. Please include a cell phone number.
X		o. Align your plan for managing staff and students if or when someone in the building tests positive for COVID-19 with the CDC's What to do if a Student Becomes Sick or Reports a New COVID-19 Diagnosis at School flowchart.
Communication with staff and students		
	X	p. Submit COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies by August 13, 2021 to https://forms.office.com/g/ESjpgYymqb and post publicly with completed Back-to-School Plan by August 27, 2021. Indicate the public URL where your LEA will post the Back-to-School plan.
X		q. Share information with staff and students to remind them to stay home if they are sick and inform them of updated sick-time and attendance policies.
X		r. Post signs or posters describing the district's policies and practice for wearing of masks, physical distancing, and specifying, at the entrance of facilities, that sick individuals should stay home.
X		s. Determine the steps you will take to prevent the spread of COVID-19 upon learning of a staff or student who has tested positive for COVID- 19, including how you will work with RIDOH to identify which other staff or students will need to be quarantined and how you will communicate this information to the other community members while respecting health privacy laws.
X		t. Communicate information to staff, students, and families in their preferred language or easiest mode of communication.
X		u. Discuss with or distribute information to staff and students about how the district will address staff, student, or family concerns.

Health and Safety Plan

ASSURANCES:

Instructions: Provide assurances by marking an “X” in each box next to each item to demonstrate that you have incorporated it into your reopening plan.

X	Plan and execute promotion of COVID-19 vaccination to school community, including teachers, staff, household members, and eligible students.
X	Develop and enforce policies on general spacing and movement to increase the occurrence of stable groups, especially in grade levels not yet eligible for vaccination. Include policies for both during the school day and before and after school programming.
X	Adjust policies for stable and non-stable group movement and spacing in alignment with recommendations in Health and Safety guidance

X	Document where physical distancing of at least 3 feet may not be possible and outline layered mitigation measures for these circumstances.
X	Distribute physical distancing instructions to staff and students and post physical distancing instructions/signage for visitors.
X	Inform students, staff, and visitors of the recommendation for mask use in crowded outdoor settings and indoors for unvaccinated individuals.
X	In the case of universal mask policies, ensure exceptions for specific categories of people as outlined in Health and Safety guidance.
X	Refer to CDC guidance for the use and care of masks
X	Communicate with staff and students the need to stay home when sick, if they test positive for, have been exposed to, or have symptoms of COVID-19. Monitoring for symptoms of infectious illness every day through home-based screening is encouraged.
X	Post Symptom Signage at the entrance(s) of school and district building. Schools with more comprehensive screening methods (verbally, by app, by phone, or by another method).
X	Utilize CDC guidance for cleaning, disinfection , and hand hygiene .
X	Schools should revise/continue to follow sick policies in alignment with The Outbreak Response Protocols: PreK-12 and communicate it to staff, students, and families.
X	Align your plan for managing staff and students if or when a someone in the building tests positive for COVID-19 with the CDC's What to do if a Student Becomes Sick or Reports a New COVID-19 Diagnosis at School flowchart.
X	Share information with staff and students to remind them to stay home if they are sick and inform them of updated sick-time and attendance policies.
X	Post signs or posters describing the district's rules for wearing of masks, physical distancing, and specifying, at the entrance of facilities, that sick individuals should stay home.
X	Determine the steps you will take to prevent the spread of COVID-19 upon learning of a staff or student who has tested positive for COVID-19, including how you will work with RIDOH to identify which other staff or students will need to be quarantined and how you will communicate this information to the other community members while respecting health privacy laws.
X	Communicate information to staff, students, and families in their preferred language or easiest mode of communication.
X	Discuss with or distribute information to staff and students about how the district will address staff, student, or family concerns.

EVIDENCE:

Instructions: Complete the following fields with narratives or attach/link to relevant documents or artifacts. Please provide responses assuming a full in-person return and note how those plans would need to be adjusted/modified for partial and limited in-person scenarios.

 Health and Safety subCommittee recommendations for opening schools 2021-2022



1. Assign a minimum of one representative to work with RIDOH on testing staff and students, contact tracing, case investigation, isolation and quarantine, and any other follow-up related to outbreak containment. Identify this representative to RIDE by providing contact information.

Full Name	Email Address:
Carole Sivo	carole.sivo@warwickschools.org
	Cell Phone Number:

2. Submit COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies by August 13, 2021 to <https://forms.office.com/g/ESipgYymqb> and post publicly with completed Back-to-School Plan by August 27, 2021. Indicate the public URL where your LEA will post the Back-to-School plan.

warwickschools.org

Instruction (Please refer to the attached 2021 Reopening Planning Guide)

Provide Assurance	Submit Evidence	
Instruction		
	X	a. Develop a plan for assessing students' learning progress and loss that includes multiple forms of assessment (diagnostics, formative, student work) for all students. This plan must include an assessment of learning for multilingual learners and differently-abled students.
	X	b. In alignment with LEAP Task Force Priorities and Recommendations, identify how to account for learning loss (reteaching, ability grouping, adjust pacing guides, increased focus on core subjects, etc.) for all students. Plans should include specific detail for multilingual learners and differently abled students as well as the information for all students generally.
X		c. Develop a plan for how services and educational programming will be provided if a student must remain home for short periods of time due to illness, isolation, or quarantine.
X		d. Develop methods for assessing student engagement and mastery. Be sure to prioritize vulnerable students for re-engagement.
X		e. Develop a system to continually monitor learning progress and loss.
X		f. Determine changes, if any, to testing, grading, report cards, attendance, and promotion policies from SY20-21 to SY21-22.
Remediation and Intervention		
	X	g. Develop a process for identifying students potentially in need of additional supports (academic or social/emotional) and a process to determine when students may no longer need additional services (entrance and exit criteria for interventions). In alignment with LEAP Task Force Priorities, interventions

		<i>specific to multilingual learners, differently abled students, and other student groups that have been historically marginalized should be noted in the plan.</i>
X		<i>h. Inventory intervention programs and services that are available to students, especially those transitioning back to in-person instruction from distance learning.</i>
Special Education Services		
X		<i>i. Develop a plan to revisit students' Individualized Education Plans in partnership with teachers and parents to reflect evolving needs.</i>
Staff Supports		
X		<i>j. Assess professional learning needs for administrators, educators, support staff, nurses, and non-certified staff members.</i>
X		<i>k. Develop professional development plan on curriculum implementation and instruction that considers developmental appropriateness.</i>
X		<i>l. Provide training for restorative supports and professional learning offerings for teachers around trauma, social emotional learning, restorative practices, and culturally responsive education.</i>
Family and Community Engagement (communication and partnerships)		
	X	<i>m. Gather feedback from families, students, teachers, and leaders on the SY20-21 experience and hopes for SY21-22. Incorporate feedback into LEA Back-to-School Plan. Provide to RIDE evidence that data has been collected and key takeaways from the responses.</i>
X		<i>n. Refine the school-level parent communication strategy to keep parents informed on (1) student progress and (2) changes in health and safety guidelines.</i>
X		<i>o. Develop plans to reestablish student and classroom culture through emphasizing relationships with students and parents.</i>

Instructional Plan

ASSURANCES:

Instructions: Provide assurances by marking an "X" in each box next to each item to demonstrate that you have incorporated it into your reopening plan

X	<i>Develop a plan for how services and educational programming will be provided if a student must remain home for short periods of time due to illness, isolation, or quarantine.</i>
X	<i>Develop methods for assessing student engagement and mastery. Be sure to prioritize vulnerable students for re-engagement.</i>
X	<i>Develop a system to continually monitor learning progress and loss.</i>
X	<i>Determine changes, if any, to testing, grading, report cards, attendance, and promotion policies from SY20-21 to SY21-22.</i>
X	<i>Inventory intervention programs and services that are available to students, especially those transitioning back to in-person instruction from distance learning.</i>

x	Develop a plan to revisit students' Individualized Education Plans in partnership with teachers and parents to reflect evolving needs.
x	Develop professional development plan on curriculum implementation and instruction that considers developmental appropriateness.
x	Assess professional learning needs for administrators, educators, support staff, nurses, and non-certified staff members.
x	Refine the school-level parent communication strategy to keep parents informed on (1) student progress and (2) changes in health and safety guidelines.
x	Develop plans to reestablish student and classroom culture through emphasizing relationships with students and parents.

EVIDENCE:

Instructions: Complete the following fields with narratives or attach/link to relevant documents or artifacts. Please provide responses assuming a full in-person return and note how those plans would need to be adjusted/modified for partial and limited in-person scenarios.

 *Reopening 2021 Planning Guide - Elementary/Curriculum/Special Education/Technolo...

1. Develop a plan for assessing students' learning progress and loss that includes multiple forms of assessment (diagnostics, formative, student work) for **all** students. This plan must include an assessment of learning for multilingual learners and differently-abled students.

Please refer to the attached 2021 Reopening Planning Guide.

2. In alignment with LEAP Task Force Priorities and Recommendations, identify how to account for learning loss (reteaching, ability grouping, adjust pacing guides, increased focus on core subjects, etc.) for all students. Plans should include specific detail for multilingual learners and differently-abled students as well as the information for all students generally.

Please refer to the attached 2021 Reopening Planning Guide.

3. Develop a process for identifying students potentially in need of additional supports (academic or social/emotional) and a process to determine when students may no longer need additional services (entrance and exit criteria for interventions). In alignment with LEAP Task Force Priorities, interventions specific to multilingual learner, differently-abled students, and other student groups that have been historically marginalized should be noted in the plan.

Please refer to the attached 2021 Reopening Planning Guide.

4. Gather feedback from families, students, teachers, and leaders on the SY20-21 experience and hopes for SY21-22. Incorporate feedback into LEA Back-to-School Plan. Provide to RIDE evidence that data has been collected and key takeaways from the responses.

Please refer to the attached 2021 Reopening Planning Guide. Survey link is included:
[Reopening of Schools Survey 2021-2022](#)

3. Social-Emotional and Mental Health Support

Provide Assurance	Submit Evidence	

Social-Emotional and Mental Health Support		
X		a. Establish or maintain a support team focused on student and staff mental health and wellness.
	X	b. Designate a mental health liaison for the LEA who will work with the district, RI Department of Health, and community partners.
X		c. Assess mental health resources - develop a plan to access additional, external supports to address staff and students' mental health and wellbeing.
X		d. Screen or evaluate, and continuously monitor students for mental health needs.
X		e. Establish ongoing reporting protocols for staff to evaluate physical and mental health status of students and report concerns.
X		f. Establish ongoing reporting protocols for staff to evaluate their own physical and mental health status and report concerns.
X		g. Provide resources for staff self-care, including resiliency strategies and RIDE's menu of mental health resources .

Social-Emotional and Mental Health Support Plan

ASSURANCES:

Instructions: Provide assurances by marking an "X" in each box next to each item to demonstrate that you have incorporated it into your reopening plan

X	Establish or maintain a support team focused on student and staff mental health and wellness.
X	Assess mental health resources - develop a plan to access additional, external supports to address staff and students' mental health and wellbeing.
X	Screen or evaluate students for mental health needs.
X	Establish ongoing reporting protocols for staff to evaluate physical and mental health status of students and report concerns.
X	Establish ongoing reporting protocols for staff to evaluate their own physical and mental health status and report concerns.
X	Provide resources for staff self-care, including resiliency strategies and RIDE's menu of mental health resources.

EVIDENCE: [2021-2022 SOCIAL EMOTIONAL & MENTAL HEALTH PLAN](#)

Instructions: Complete the following fields with narratives or attach/link to relevant documents or artifacts. Please provide responses assuming a full in-person return and note how those plans would need to be adjusted/modified for partial and limited in-person scenarios.

1. Designate a mental health liaison for the LEA who will work with the district, RI Department of Health, and community partners.

Kristin Murray kristin.murray@warwickschools.org

Reopening Operations		
Provide Assurance	Submit Evidence	
Facilities and Maintenance		
X		a. Audit necessary materials and supply chain for cleaning, disinfecting, and preventing spread of disease. For example, hand soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, etc. Determine the need for cleaning materials and who will be responsible for the ongoing procurement and distribution of these materials.
X		b. Meet with school-based staff (including custodial staff) to review cleaning and disinfection policies.
X		c. Determine if additional staff is needed to meet cleaning requirements and the cost of that additional staff.
X		d. Establish procedures for entering the school building for teachers, students, visitors, vendors (e.g., which entrances, in what manner [e.g. staggered arrival], compliance with screening policies).
Operations (Budget, Staffing, Scheduling, Food Services)		
X		e. Develop a high-level picture of the district budget for this upcoming school year. Consider: change in revenues, change in expenditures, spring budget holdovers – costs or revenues-, COVID specific funding (CARES Act, CRRSA, ARP ESSER Funds, emergency funding, etc.)
X		f. Determine foods service needs, being mindful of physical distancing and infection prevention guidelines (location of meals, food service structure, facilities/ equipment adjustments, staffing needs, staff training, etc.).
X		g. Develop a plan that responds to workforce shortages due to quarantine and isolation in key operational staff, including but not limited to substitute teachers and custodial staff
Transportation		
X		h. Assess student arrival and dismissal protocol (school bus drop off, parent drop off, etc.).
X		i. Develop bus procedures for bus drivers and students based on guidance from RIDE and RIDOH. Provide training as needed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mask requirement (by federal order) - Seating charts, with assigned seats as much as possible - Cleaning schedule - Open windows when safe and feasible

Technology (see more information here)		
X		j. Designate a lead technology point of contact.
X		k. Develop a return to school technology plan.
X		l. Assess software, hardware, and connectivity needs for fall learning (for staff and students) and compare with existing resources to identify gap in technology needs.
X		m. Survey families to determine technology needs.
X		n. Develop and revise process for inventory of technology, as needed.
Family and Community Engagement (communication and partnerships)		
X		o. Identify the key stakeholder groups to be included in ongoing communication. Consider: school leaders, school-based staff, school board, students, families, community members, central office staff, etc.
	X	p. Develop plan to periodically review the Back-to-School Plan no less than every six months through September 30, 2024, revise plan as appropriate, AND seek public input on revisions from students, families, school and district administrators, teachers, other school staff, unions, and other stakeholders.

Re-opening Operation Plan

ASSURANCES:

Instructions: Provide assurances by marking an “X” in each box next to each item to demonstrate that you have incorporated it into your reopening plan

X	Audit necessary materials and supply chain for cleaning, disinfecting, and preventing spread of disease. Determine the need for cleaning materials and who will be responsible for the ongoing procurement and distribution of these materials.
X	Meet with school-based staff (including custodial staff) to review cleaning and disinfection policies.
X	Determine if additional staff is needed to meet cleaning requirements and the cost of that additional staff.
X	Establish procedures for entering the school building for teachers, students, visitors, vendors. (e.g., which entrances, in what manner [e.g. staggered arrival], compliance with screening policies).
X	Develop a high-level picture of the district budget for this upcoming school year. Consider: change in revenues, change in expenditures, spring budget holdovers – costs or revenues, COVID specific funding (CARES Act, ESSER Funds, emergency funding, etc.)
X	Determine food service needs, being mindful of social distancing and infection prevention guidelines (location of meals, food service structure, facilities/ equipment adjustments, staffing needs, staff training, etc.)
X	Develop a plan that responds to workforce shortages due to quarantine and isolation in key operational staff, including but not limited to substitute teachers and custodial staff.
X	Assess student arrival protocol (school bus drop off, parent drop off, etc.).

x	Develop bus procedures for bus drivers and students based on guidance from RIDE and RIDOH. Provide training as needed.
x	Designate a lead technology point of contact.
x	Develop a return to school technology plan.
x	Assess software, hardware, and connectivity needs for fall learning (for staff and students) and compare with existing resources to identify gap in technology needs.
x	Survey families to determine technology needs.
x	Develop and revise process for inventory of technology.
x	Identify the key stakeholder groups to be included in ongoing communication. Consider: school leaders, school-based staff, school board, students, families, community members, central office staff, etc.

EVIDENCE:

Instructions: Complete the following fields with narratives or attach/link to relevant documents or artifacts. Please provide responses assuming a full in-person return and note how those plans would need to be adjusted/modified for partial and limited in-person scenarios.

1. Develop plan to periodically review the Back-to-School Plan no less than every six months through September 30, 2024, revise plan as appropriate, AND seek public input on revisions from students, families, school and district administrators, teachers, other school staff, unions, and other stakeholders.

See the plan below.

 Review and Revise Back to School Plans